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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceived availability of funds for teaching support and faculty development, the importance of teaching in tenure and merit salary adjustments, and the level of financial support for faculty attendance at professional meetings and institutional support for global faculty development. Data were gathered from questionnaires from 142 academic deans, 392 department chairs, and 1,173 faculty members. Faculty reported lower tenure weights for teaching and research than deans, but higher tenure weights for committee work and publishing. Faculty perceive that there is no merit salary increment for outstanding teaching, though deans and, to a lesser extent, department chairs indicated otherwise. Concerning the adequacy of institutional funding for teaching and research support, ratings of good or excellent varied from 46% of the deans to 40% of the chairs and 33% of the faculty. Nearly a third of the faculty received $250 or less support for all forms of professional development in academic year 1984-85. Data support the notion of a gradient of ignorance about the availability of funds for the support of teaching and research from deans to faculty. It is concluded that this gradient serves to maximize the dean's power and control over faculty access to support funding. Includes 11 references. (JDD)

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A National Study of the Perceptions of Administrative Support for Teaching and Faculty Development

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A National Study of the Perceptions of Administrative Support for Teaching and Faculty Development

Since 1983, the authors have been working on a series of projects which examine support for teaching in higher education. These projects extend the approach to the study of institutional supports for teaching that was begun in the 1970's by the Institutional Context Task Force of the American Sociological Association's Projects on Teaching. In the current study, national samples of deans, department chairs, and faculty are drawn from the same set of randomly selected institutions. This study discusses such topics as the perceived availability of funds for teaching support and faculty development, the importance of teaching in tenure and merit salary adjustments, and the level of financial support for faculty attendance at professional meetings and institutional support for global faculty development. The perceptions of faculty on most variables can be compared with those of their chairs and deans because the three questionnaires included parallel items measuring these variables. Consistent with our earlier research, we have found a discrepancy in the perceptions of funding for most activities from deans through chairs to faculty. We loosely refer to this discrepancy as a gradient of ignorance, and we believe that this institutionalized ignorance serves to maximize the dean's power and control over funding and access to various teaching support functions. In contrast, the faculty are to some extent disenfranchised from meaningful participation in institutional governance and alienated from the educational enterprise by the double standard (ideal norms favoring teaching, real norms favoring prestige-conferring activities such as research and publication) and the double-talk practiced by administra-

tors when they attend to matters related to faculty development and the institutional support of excellence in teaching.

This paper is primarily descriptive, for the survey on which it is based represents a preliminary stage of data gathering rather than elaborate theory testing. It takes the perspective originally developed by Gould in The Academic Deanship (1960) and most recently applied by the authors in their studies of graduate and continuing education deans as well as chief liberal arts academic officers. Recent reports on this research include "The Operational Importance of Teaching" in Teaching Sociology (12: 47-70, 1984), "A National Study of Graduate Deans and Graduate Education" in the Council of Graduate Schools Communicator (17 [6]: 6, 1984), "The Question of Quality and the Role of the Dean" in the Journal of Continuing Higher Education (33: 2-7, 1985), "The College Dean: A Case of Miscommunication about the Importance of Teaching" in Liberal Education (67: 319-326, 1981), "Alternative Models for the Administration of Graduate Education" in Planning for Higher Education (15 [2]: 1-7) and "Chief Liberal Arts Academic Officers: The Limits of Power and Authority" in Studies in Higher Education (12: 39-50, 1987).

Methods and Data Source

The population used in this study includes deans, department chairs, and faculty within all colleges and universities identified by the editors of Barron's Guide (1984 edition) as having a total student population of more than 1,000. A stratified random sample was drawn from this universe which resulted in mailing questionnaires to 265 academic deans. After one follow-up mailing, 54 percent of the deans returned usable questionnaires.

The deans were asked to provide names of department chairs in each of nine disciplines: biology, chemistry, English, history, mathematics, music, political science, psychology, and sociology. The department chairs thus identified were then sent a parallel instrument and in turn asked to provide names of their faculty members. Usable questionnaires were returned by the same proportion of department chairs as deans. A random sample of the faculty in each of the departments was sent a third version of the questionnaire, mainly containing items identical to those in the questionnaires for deans and chairs. The final faculty sample consists of 1,173 faculty members who are matched with 392 department chairs and 142 deans. Deans and chairs lacking at least one matched chair and one matched faculty member are omitted from the final sample and do not appear in our analysis. Although random sampling procedures were used throughout the study, the snowball effect of biases introduced by modest response ratios in a multi-stage sampling design such as this one makes it impossible to claim that the final matched sample is technically representative of the institutional universe from which it was drawn.

Results

Personnel Decisions

As illustrated in Table 1, faculty tend to report lower tenure weights for teaching and research than deans. Just the reverse is true for publishing. Faculty tend to have lower estimates of tenure weights than deans for research and teaching, but higher estimates of tenure weights for committee work and publishing. The greatest deans-faculty disparity among the six tenure weights is in the area of publications. As earlier research

has indicated, faculty believe that their institutions place less value on teaching than their deans say they do.

A similar approach is applied to merit salary increases in Table 2. The linear trends for the consideration of teaching and research in merit salary determinations are the same as for tenure decisions, but the gradient is steeper, decreasing from 83 percent of the deans to 47 percent of the faculty members for teaching. Considering that this question is measured by an item which has only two values (yes/no), the differences obtained are very large. How could so many faculty be ignorant of merit awards for teaching which deans and, to a lesser extent, chairs, report to be in existence? There is no easy explanation for why faculty perceive that there is no merit salary increment for outstanding teaching when their deans and, to a lesser extent, their chairs indicate otherwise.

Funding Faculty for Excellence

The adequacy of institutional funding for 14 categories of teaching and research support was independently rated by deans, chairs, and faculty respondents. Table 3 illustrates that on the average, 46 percent of the deans rated funding for these support categories as good or excellent, as compared with 40 percent of the chairs, and 33 percent of the faculty. Looking specifically at each category, the data illustrate differences among the 14 support categories. There seems to be little variation at all for grant development personnel (approximately a quarter of the deans, chairs, and faculty agree that funding for grant personnel was good or excellent); however there is the sharp drop in opinions of the adequacy of funds for research sabbaticals from deans (71 percent good or excellent)

and chairs (59 percent) to faculty (49 percent). In two support categories directly related to teaching, there is a 14-point deans-faculty differential for offering courses often enough, and a 22-point differential for sabbaticals to improve teaching. The correlations in Table 4 illustrate that with respect to resource adequacy, the correspondence of opinions between deans and chairs in the sample is, on the average, only slightly higher than the correspondence between chairs and faculty or between deans and faculty. While nearly all correlations are statistically significant and all are positive, the highest correlation explains less than a third of the variance in the relationships between deans' and chairs' judgments and the strongest deans-faculty correlation explains less than a sixth of the variance in that relationship.

Tables 5 through 7 describe the out-of-state travel to professional meetings of faculty in 1984-85 and the total institutional funds paid for professional development. These tables are more objective measures of travel and faculty development support than the subjective reports of resource adequacy discussed before. Table 5 indicates that over 50 percent of the faculty attended one or two out-of-state conferences in the 1984-85 academic year. Table 6 indicates that approximately one out of every five faculty had none of their costs reimbursed while just over half the faculty had more than 50 percent of their costs reimbursed. Finally, Table 7 shows that nearly a third of the faculty who responded received $250 or less support for all forms of professional development in academic year 1984-85, including reimbursements for professional meeting attendance. Exactly one in six faculty received more than $2,000, which is strikingly low when one remembers that many of these faculty are on sabbatical and,

therefore, are receiving at least half of their salaries as part or all of their professional development support while away from the duties of campus life. Few of the faculty remaining on campus receive as much as $2,000 in total professional development support from their institutions.

Conclusion

The data presented in this paper are generally consistent with our notion of a gradient of ignorance about the availability of funds for the support of teaching and research from deans to faculty. We believe the gradient to be functional for deans who wish to maximize their power and control over faculty access to support funding. It is perhaps easier to understand this phenomenon if we view differences between the perceptions of deans and faculty along a continuum of ideal to real norms. For example, the verbal behavior of deans indicates a strong commitment to the ideal norm of teaching as paramount, yet faculty responses suggest that the real norms of resource allocation, tenure deliberations and merit salary awards are much less favorable to teaching. This double standard (ideal norms supporting teaching, real norms supporting activities such as research and publication) and the consequent double-talk practiced by deans alienates faculty from the educational enterprise. Unfortunately, the modest funds made available to faculty for their professional development serve to reinforce negative elements in their self-images as teacher-scholars. Professionals whose development needs are ignored by their institutions can hardly consider themselves and their teaching to be highly valued by the organizations in which they are employed. It is likely that this devaluing of professors is reflected by decreased quality of teaching in the college classroom.

TABLE 1. Tenure Weights Assigned to Selected Faculty Areas of Professional Performance as seen by Deans, Chairs and Faculty

Area of Faculty Professional Performance	Tenure Weight	Proportion of Respondents (%)*		
		Deans	Chairs	Faculty
Teaching	1	65	63	52
Research	1 or 2	59	63	53
Publication	1 or 2	45	57	60
Committees	1, 2 or 3	34	44	40
Professional organizations	5 or 6	35	39	35
Community service	6	44	52	51

N=1121

*High tenure weights are slightly over represented due to ties in rankings. Percentages of deans and chairs are based on matched sets of respondents, each containing a unique faculty member and his or her department chair and dean.

TABLE 2. Merit Salary Increases for Faculty Teaching Research and Public Service as seen by Deans, Chairs, and Faculty

Area of Faculty Professional Performance	Respondents Indicating the Use of Merit Salary Increases (%)*		
	Deans	Chairs	Faculty
Teaching	83	72	47
Research	81	75	62
Public Service	34	36	19

N=1121

*Percentages of deans and chairs are based on matched sets of respondents, each containing a unique faculty member and his or her department chair and dean.

Table 3. Adequacy of Funds for Selected Teaching and Research Support Activities as Rated by Deans, Chairs, and Faculty

Resource	Respondents Rating Adequacy as Good or Excellent (%)* Deans	Chairs	Faculty
Conference travel	57	39	32
Grant development travel	27	21	14
Research by senior professors	34	20	20
Research by untenured professors	44	57	25
Computers	38	41	43
Research equipment	30	17	19
Library books	56	55	48
Library journals	54	43	40
Grant development personnel	23	24	23
Offering courses often enough	79	78	65
Research assistants	19	18	18
Teaching assistants	33	39	29
Sabbaticals to improve teaching	57	45	35
Sabbaticals to do research	71	59	49
Average	46	40	33

N=1121

*Percentages of deans and chairs are based on matched sets of respondents, each containing a unique faculty member and his or her department chair and dean.

TABLE 4. Correlations Among the Judgments of Deans, Chairs and Faculty About Resource Adequacy

Resource	Tau b Correlations Between: Deans & Chairs	Chairs & Faculty	Deans & Faculty
Conference travel	.55***	.41***	.40***
Grant development travel	.25***	.26***	.21***
Research by senior professors	.31***	.23**	.25***
Research by untenured professors	.36***	.29***	.28***
Computers	.29***	.29***	.20***
Research equipment	.24*	.28***	.20***
Library books	.25***	.36***	.27***
Library journals	.20***	.31***	.24**
Grant development personnel	.08**	.24***	.15***
Offering courses often enough	.01	.17***	.08**
Research assistants	.25***	.21***	.17***
Teaching assistants	.35***	.37***	.28***
Sabbaticals to improve teaching	.39***	.35***	.32***
Sabbaticals to do research	.44***	.37***	.39***

N=1121
***Significant at less than .001.
**Significant at less than .01.
*Significant at less than .05.

TABLE 5. Out-of-State Professional Meetings Attended in Academic Year 1984-85

Number of Meetings Attended	Number of Faculty	Proportion of Faculty (%)
0	289	25
1	363	31
2	266	23
3	150	13
4 or more	102	9

N=1121

TABLE 6. Reimbursed Costs for Out-of State Professional Meeting Attendance in Academic Year 1984-85

Proportion of Costs Reimbursed (%)	Number of Faculty	Proportion of Faculty (%)
None*	210	22
1-25	118	12
26-50	145	15
51-75	129	14
75-90	140	15
More than 90	226	23

N=1121

*Adjusted to subtract the faculty who did not attend out-of-state meeting in 1984-85.

TABLE 7. Total Institutional Funds Paid For All Forms of Professional Development in Academic Year 1984-85

Support Level (%)	Number of Faculty	Proportion of Faculty (%)*
0	159	14
1-250	210	18
251-500	229	20
501-1,000	193	17
1,001-2,000	130	11
More than 2,000	195	17

N=1121

*Percentages do not sum 100 due to statistical rounding.

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